SEVIS-Smart

...a SEVP Publication
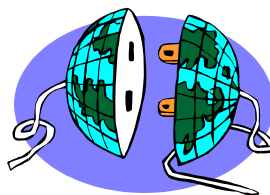
A Word From Tom Cook...

The Road to CIPRIS development and now SEVIS deployment has been a long one and quite bumpy on occasion, but now the final SEVIS testing phase in several Boston schools is underway. Initial SEVIS implementation will begin in July 2002 ahead of schedule.

I want to personally thank all the people that worked so hard to reach this point. I can't mention all the people and offices involved, but I would like to especially thank a few. First, I want to thank the Adjudications and Information Resource Management staff for the extra effort and for always maintaining the highest standards of quality. Special thanks to the Atlanta District office staff and the 21 educational institutions that participated in the CIPRIS pilot, and to the CIPRIS project manager and development team for laying the sound foundation that SEVIS is built upon.

This project not only meets the INS mission and statutory requirements to monitor foreign student and exchange visitor nonimmigrants in the United States, but is the first project to employ e-government to improve the efficiency of doing business in close partnership with the involved stakeholders.

To the SEVIS team a well done and keep it up.

Tom Cook is Acting Assistant Commissioner of the INS Adjudications Division

Special points of interest:

- USA PATRIOT Act Enacted

- The direction of SEVIS—Where are we now? And Where are we going?

- Find the answers to technical questions about SEVIS on page 2.

A WORD FROM THE SEVP COORDINATOR

Welcome! Many of you have been aware of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), in one form or another, as the program has made an interesting journey over the years. Progress has continued from initial Task Force review, through the pilot CIPRIS program, to the impending national Student & Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). While the INS has been moving toward e-government, recent events and l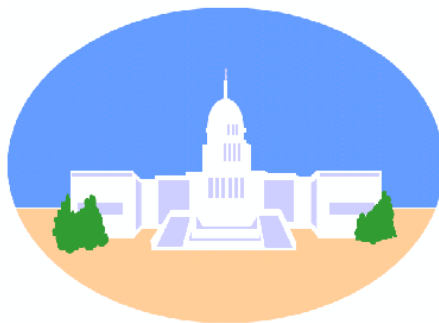egislation have dramatically accelerated the deployment of SEVIS. Through this newsletter, we hope to increase communication and provide updates and information on SEVIS to assist you in understanding and adjusting to this digital environment.

— Chase Garwood

LEGISLATION AFFECTING SEVP/SEVIS

In the past few months there has been a flurry of congressional activity, post-Sept. 11, that touches upon international students and exchange visitors. However, so far, the only newly enacted legislative authority that affects SEVP/SEVIS is the USA PATRIOT Act (Pub. L. 107-56 sec 416). Enacted October 26, 2001, section 416 now mandates that SEVP/SEVIS be fully implemented and expanded prior to January 1, 2003. This deadline requires that SEVIS be ready and available for a national user group. A compliance deadline requiring all INS and DOS institutions to use SEVIS will be set by regulation.

This greatly accelerates our project timelines and we are adjusting our work and deployment strategies accordingly. In order to meet the USA PATRIOT deadline of "prior to" January 1, 2003, the program is now authorized funding for ac-

celerated program development. In addition, section 416 mandates the inclusion of information on the non-immigrant's date of entry and the port of entry in SEVIS.

Finally, we are currently developing the program regulations that will implement SEVP/SEVIS, as authorized by IIRIRA and USA PATRIOT, and will provide compliance deadlines.

This regulation will follow standard procedures and will be published in the Federal Register at the appropriate time. The USA PATRIOT Act also amends IIRIRA sec. 641 to add the phrase "other approved educational institutions." The other primary elements of IIRIRA sec. 641 remain unchanged.

For reference:

*Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), Section 101(A)(15), subparagraphs (F), (J), and (M), as amended, establish the eligibility and requirements governing the admission and status of nonimmigrant students and exchange visitors.

*IIRIRA section 641 (Pub. L. 104-208, as amended by Pub. L. 106-396) in the

 *USA PATRIOT section 416 (Pub. L 107-56)

*8 CFR 214

*22 CFR 62

Tech Talk

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is the Internet-based system that will provide tracking and monitoring functionality, with access to accurate and current information on non-immigrant students (F and M visa) and exchange visitors (J visa), and their dependents. There are two ways to communicate with SEVIS.

First is the "real-time interactive" method, which is working (e.g., inputting or updating information, printing forms) much like many common websites. Second is the "batch" method, which is an authorized institution's IT system or vendor software communicating with SEVIS and uploading and downloading information (system to system). There is no access or subscriber charge for use of SEVIS.

SEVIS real-time interactive has been designed to operate from any computer connected to the Internet, with authorized login and password credentials.
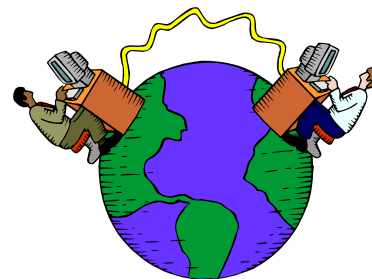
SEVIS system requirements are relatively modest, and should not drive the configuration. Realistically, however, we would recommend a Pentium III equivalent machine with Internet Explorer 5.5 or equivalent as the browser.

Therefore, for real-time interactive, there is no software to download or provide Via CD-ROM, since SEVIS is accessed through the Internet/WWW similar to many commonly used websites. Memory and hard drive requirements are obviously a function of the number of non-immigrants in attendance and the amount of data desired to be maintained locally.

In the event your institution would operate in a "batch" mode, which will likely be the method of choice for schools or sponsors with very large numbers, we require that the data be transferred in XML format by your system or vendor software solution. The Interface Control Document, which in-

cludes the XML DTD, is currently available for download at http://www.sevp.net, and should also soon be posted on the INS website. These technical specifications should be clear to your technical staff or vendor for the data elements we are requiring and the communication process.

INS published in the Commerce Business Daily and sponsored multiple vendor conferences to specifically release these SEVIS technical specifications for batch-interface as soon as practical, San Diego, CA (8/28-30/01) and Charleston, SC (9/4-6/01).

WHERE ARE WE NOW? WHERE ARE WE GOING?

There has been a significant amount of media attention and congressional focus on SEVP/SEVIS since the tragedies of Sept. 11. As mentioned, the most significant change is a greatly accelerated development and implementation of SEVIS for national use prior to January 1, 2003. However, as far as changes to the specific information to be collected, those data elements are the same that institutions have been required to collect and maintain for F/M and J non-immigrants under existing law and regulation for some time. The PATRIOT Act does add port of entry and date of entry data. (Please reference: 8 CFR 214.3(g), IIRIRA section 641 (Pub. L. 104-208, as amended by Pub. L. 106-396), and PATRIOT Act section 416 (Pub. L. 107-56). (See also, DOS regula-

tions at 22 CFR 62 for J visa—exchange visitor data elements).

Obviously, we have had to quickly adjust our entire program in the past month and are still finalizing our project schedules to meet an accelerated mandate. Currently, the only firm date we can guarantee for SEVIS availability is the USA PATRIOT deadline of January 1, 2003. However, we are targeting Summer 2002 for national access to real-time interactive and Fall 2002 for national access to batch mode.

In addition, we will no longer deploy SEVIS in a phased, "4-corner," geographic fashion over an extended time period. Instead, when SEVIS is released in the 2002 calendar year, it will be available to everyone, nationwide (real-

time interactive will be released first, followed shortly by batch mode).

Further regulations are currently being developed and will be published in the Federal Register stating compliance deadlines for use of SEVIS by institutions certified to accept nonimmigrant students and exchange visitors.

What Institutions Say About SEVIS (formerly CIPRIS)

The Institutions that were pilot members with the CIPRIS system are eagerly anticipating the transition to SEVIS. It is because of their pioneering spirit to join us during a time when the future was a bit uncertain that has made this point in time quite possible. The Pilot Institutions have made favorable comments about the ease of use that the system provides to other schools who are about to join us.

"I am amazed how easy this new SEVIS system is to use. It really does simplify the process by eliminating so much paperwork."

One school that has been extremely supportive and helpful is Auburn University. They have established an excellent website which was developed, and is being maintained for the pilot schools to keep them, and others informed of any new developments. The Auburn site is available at: http://www.auburn.edu/academic/other/international_education/sevp/index2htm

The Auburn Univer-

sity site offers detailed information and links to other helpful sites as well. So a special thank you to them and our other pilot members as well.

Many schools had similar questions about the technical requirements needed to access the system. That information is listed in this issue under Tech Talk. We thank John Smith from EDS for contributing to Tech Talk.

For more information, continue to reference our main INS site at http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/services/

IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW...

Law and Regulation require SEVIS to collect the following data:

I-20/IAP-66 Form Information

Name, Place and Date of Birth; Country of citizenship; current address

Status (full-time v. part-time)

Date of commencement of studies

Number of credits completed per year

Degree program and field of study

Practical training (beginning/ending dates)

Termination date and reason, if known

Date of visa issuance and classification granted

Current academic and program status of alien

Any disciplinary actions taken against the alien due to criminal conviction

Information on the date of entry and port of entry.

Challenge of the Month:
Dare to be Great!

SEVIS OVERVIEW — A PRIMER

SEVIS enables schools and program sponsors to transmit electronic information (I-20 and IAP-66 (DS-2019) Forms) and event notifications, via the Internet, to the INS and Department of State (DOS) throughout a student's or exchange visitor's stay in the United States. SEVIS will be informed of status changes for international students and exchange visitors including, but not limited to, admissions at the Port of Entry, changes of address, program extensions, employment notifications, and changes in program of study.

SEVIS is also able to collect information and track certification of institutions through the Form I-17 process. The use of SEVIS ensures that information is collected in a usable, and shareable electronic format at the very first step, prior to DOS visa issuance, and provides current, accurate data and updates throughout the non-immigrant's course of study or program.

Sevis also enhances the legitimacy of the forms through the use of encrypted 2D bar codes, generated only by SEVIS, and alleviates document control issues experienced by I-20 issuance by multiple organizations to single individuals, since SEVIS tracks who is issuing forms and to whom, and is able to invalidate all extraneous forms. INS is

working closely between its SEVIS and Inspections systems, as well as with DOS systems in order to ensure data share opportunities.

Furthermore, SEVIS streamlines and reduces wasteful system redundancies. Currently INS maintains an outdated mainframe database called Students Schools (ST/SC) where I-20 Form information is data-entered, and DOS maintains their own mainframe database called Exchange Visitor Information System (EVIS) where IAP-66 Form information is data-entered. These systems are based upon routing and storage of paper forms.

SEVIS alleviates the need for such last step data-entry of information, and also alleviates the need for similar databases maintained by different federal agencies. Once fully operational and all institutions affected are mandated to utilize the system,

SEVIS will completely replace and aggregate the older STSC and EVIS mainframes into a central database.. SEVIS has been developed in a partnership between INS and DOS.

INS has conducted a pilot program known as CIPRIS (Coordinated Interagency Partnership Regulating International Students), to test the concepts and technology involved in an electronic reporting mechanism. The CIPRIS system project was developed with DOS, DOEd, and experts from INS-authorized schools and exchange visitor programs. It ran as a pilot from 1997-1999, involving the Atlanta Hartsfield Airport and District Office, the Texas Service Center, and 21 institutions of higher learning and exchange programs in the states of Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

The pilot program was successful and information obtained from CIPRIS was used in the national system development effort that resulted in SEVIS. CIPRIS has continued as an operational prototype to-date and will soon transition to SEVIS. As stated, SEVIS is now mandated to be fully available by January, 1, 2003.